



THE BEE GEES—they give Polydor Records their first chart-topper in the shape of "Massachusetts".

Bee Gees—'It's the cold weather that makes us sound like the Beatles!'

IN their manager's flat, the Bee Gees lolled about, surrounded by the corpses of animals (some stuffed, others merely skinned), waiting to be interviewed by gentlemen of the press. It was too difficult to talk to all five at once, so I gave my full attention to the twins, Maurice and Robin.

This wasn't at all arduous because Robin had a bad throat and wasn't supposed to do any talking, and Maurice was in chatty form. "We're thoroughly used to being interviewed now, since our working holiday in America," said Maurice. "Trouble was, all the reporters seemed to ask the same questions, such as how we got our group name, and who was our biggest influence. We al-

ways said that when we found out who our influences were, we'd be able to answer the question! Everybody we've ever heard has influenced us, starting with Bill Haley, who was the big name at the time of our stage debut — which was at the Gaumont Theatre, Manchester. On that occasion we sang — by accident!

"We were supposed to be miming (that was the popular thing then) to a record of 'Young Love' by Tommy Steele. But the idiot in the projection booth dropped the disc and broke it. So we just went on and sang the one song we knew — 'Lollipop'."

Another favourite question asked in the U.S.A. of the brothers Gibb (plus Colin and Vince) was: "Why do you sound like The Beatles?" Maurice's reply: "We were brought up in Manchester, just 30 miles away from Liverpool and The Beatles, so it's hardly surprising that we have sounds in common."

I think it's the cold weather that does it to the voices."

It's only Maurice and Robin and their elder brother Barry who write songs. "Vince and Colin make suggestions, which we use on the recording sessions, but other than that I don't think they want to step in and join us on our writing efforts in case they spoil our style and method which is obviously getting results at the moment."

These results — becoming ever more fantastically successful — have come about to the absolute and genuine astonishment of the Gibbs. "We've written songs for years, had a stockpile of 200 and we've still got about 50 we're hoping will be usable. But we only ever wrote for ourselves, never thinking anyone else would want our material. Then Billy J. Kramer recorded one of our numbers, 'Town Of Tuxley Toymaker, Part Two' and we thought this was great and began to wonder if we had a future as songwriters, even though Bill J's record didn't sell especially well. Unit Four Plus Two were next with 'Butterfly'. After that, things opened up for us — Dave Berry, Billy Fury, Adam Faith, Lulu, Tremeloes and others."

Naturally enough, the Bee Gees are proudest of "Massachusetts", which they wrote in a quarter of an hour and recorded in three takes. "It's a nice, simple, whistleable song but our next single, 'World', is more complicated. We spent a day and a night and a day recording it. The first day was all writing, and we also spent a day on arranging. We may add strings and other instruments but right now we're not sure. We want to become more adventurous in our work but perhaps 'World' is distinctive enough without any session musicians added. What do you think?"

The Bee Gees recording of "World" was duly played and it sounded perfectly all right the way it was. I advised against additives. The disc will be released very soon, hard on the heels of "Massachusetts", and it'll be interesting to hear what, if anything, they do add. Their plan, as I write, is to add strings and then if they don't think much has been gained they'll take them off again.

Curiously, the Gibbs do almost all their songwriting actually in the recording studio. "We have all our instruments there with us, we can check on the sound as we go along, and so it's worthwhile even though we have sat half a day out without achieving anything," said Maurice. At this point, Robin was aroused to disagreement. "No we haven't," he whispered. The Gibb twins are far from identical in character.

Maurice pressed on: "The main reason we only write in the studio is because if we rehearse a number for four days first we're sick of it by the time we get to the recording session."

DAVID GRIFFITHS